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Phone Calls Suggest Exile Tied to Resupplying Contras

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MIAMI, Oct. 31—At least one telephone call from a San Salvador safe house used in a secret arms resupply operation for the Nicaraguan rebels went to the Miami residence of the family of a fugitive Cuban suspected terrorist, Salvadoran phone records show.

A list of numbers dialed during August and September from two safe houses in the Salvadoran capital includes the home phone here of Nieves Posada, 50, wife of Luis Posada Carriles. Luis was held for eight years in a Venezuelan jail awaiting trial on charges stemming from the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airlines flight, in which 73 persons were killed. He escaped in August 1985.

The phone records appeared to support claims by Nicaraguan intelligence officers that Luis was one of two anti-Castro Cuban exiles who administered the secret arms flights over Nicaragua from the Ilopango military airbase in San Salvador.

Reached at her number today, Nieves said her husband phoned her from overseas several times in recent months without identifying his location. The last call was in mid-September, she said.

She did not recall receiving other telephone calls from Central America in the past two months.

Eugene Hasenfus, an American crew member from the C123 cargo plane shot down over Nicaragua Oct. 5, said after his capture that one Cuban he worked with went by the name "Ramon Medina." Hasenfus said Medina coordinated flights and logistics for more than a dozen American crew members at the Ilopango base.

Hasenfus provided the addresses and telephone numbers of three San

Salvador safe houses where he, Medina and other members of the secret team stayed.

A list of phone numbers obtained from the Salvadoran phone company ANTEL shows that other calls were made from the safe house to the office of Lt. Col. Oliver North, who is assigned to the National Security Council staff at the White House. The White House has said that North served as a liaison to the anti-Sandinista forces, known as contras, but denies that he or anyone else in the administration violated congressional prohibitions against providing aid to the contras.

The ANTEL list also includes two numbers in suburban Virginia used by retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord, who has been identified in some published reports as one of the primary agents and advisers overseeing the network providing weapons and money for the contras. One number belongs to Stanford Technology Trading Corp. Another is a private number used by Secord in McLean.

Tom Green, Secord's attorney, said he thinks that Secord is president of Stanford Technology, which he described as "a straight, garden variety firm" that engages in international consulting and trading in different items, including security systems.

Green denied that Secord received calls from anyone at the safe house. "Based on my sources and intelligence, there is more to this," Green said, suggesting that the list of numbers may have been provided to U.S. journalists as part of a "foreign intelligence disinformation" campaign on behalf of Nicaragua.

Sandinista intelligence officers said in Managua they knew prior to the plane downing on Oct. 5 that Posada had traveled from a hiding place in Venezuela to El Salvador. They said Hasenfus picked out a snapshot of Posada from several photos and identified Posada as Medina.

Hasenfus told his Sandinista captors that both Medina and the second Cuban at Ilopango, whose true name is Felix Ismael Rodriguez, proudly claimed to be "friends" of Vice President Bush.

Bush has said he met on three occasions briefly with Rodriguez, but did not know Medina. The vice president said he was not involved with organizing or monitoring the clandestine arms drops to rebels, known as contras, in Nicaragua's mountains.

Other U.S. officials in Washington and San Salvador have denied an active role in the arms resupply effort, which involved dozens of flights in Central America since February. But U.S. Embassy personnel in San Salvador knew of the operation and crossed paths frequently with its team members. However, no evidence has emerged to date that the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador knew "Medina" could be Posada.

Nieves Posada said she has not seen her husband of 23 years since February 1985, when he was still in the San Juan de los Morros penitentiary in Venezuela. She said she sold her own house here last year to send \$25,000 to her husband "to pay for his escape."

The circumstances of Posada's flight from prison remain unclear.

His trial was stalled as successive Venezuelan judges were buffeted by strong pressure from Cuban authorities to prosecute the case, and from the large Cuban exile community in Venezuela to free the four defendants, among them Posada.

Venezuelan and American investigators have said Posada was present at a June 1976 Cuban "terrorist summit" in the Dominican Republic where the airliner attack was planned. Among the victims of the explosion which ripped apart the aircraft in flight were a Cuban fencing team and several North Korean diplomats.

Posada is regarded by some militant anti-Castro Cuban exiles as a heroic patriot and innocent victim of judicial persecution in Venezuela.

According to CIA records, Posada, identified as a demolitions ex-

pert, worked virtually full-time for the CIA from the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 until 1967. He the took a high-level post in Venezuelan intelligence, where he continued to serve as a CIA informer until June 1974. Posada and Rodriguez served together in the U.S. Army at Fort Benning, Ga., after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, relatives said. They apparently reunited during the mid-1960s on a secret campaign to launch attacks on Cuba from Nicaragua.

Staff writers Dana Priest, Charles R. Babcock and Edward Cody contributed to this report.



LUIS POSADA CARRILES
... a CIA employe in 1961-1967